

## "THREE YEARS TO-NIGHT."

BY SALLIE M. BRYAN.

When the winds shook off the twilight  
From the trees, like purple bloom,  
Something like a wounded flutter  
Stirr'd the curtains of the gloom,  
By the wind that blew the twilight  
Far away, like purple bloom.

Was it some wild bird of rose-time  
Quivering on a broken wing,  
With a wish to go to summer—  
With a wish to fly and sing  
Where sun-haunted birds of rose-time  
Never clasp a broken wing?

Yes, that flutter stirr'd my memory;  
Yea, that wild bird is my heart;  
And, sun-haunted, it sits longing  
For the quivering to depart,  
For—oh, rose-time, oh, my memory,  
Oh, wild bird that is my heart!

Hush—a risen, ghostly music  
Whispers slow—"Three years to-night!"  
And waits, leaning on the darkness,  
Trembling, as it were from fright;  
Never-weary, ghostly music!  
Still it sighs—"Three years to-night!"

While I listen you are guessing  
What sad things I see and hear,  
What enchanted shadow-fixtures—  
What weird sounds of moan and fear?  
And you smile while you are guessing  
Of the things I see and hear.

See I wine-red lips a-fading  
Into pallor and—farewell,  
In some scene of gems and lamp-bloom?—  
Hear I there a funeral bell  
Thro' the song, while lips a-fading  
Drop their wine-red in farewell?

See I some far grave, and lonesome,  
Nameless, overgrown with sand,  
Where some mother's darling molders—  
Stranger in a stranger land!  
Where they left him cold and lonesome  
To be overgrown with sand?

See I pilgrim sea-birds flying  
There with sea-mist in their wings,  
Like an offering to the sleeper?  
Hear I billow-murmurings  
Following those sea-birds flying  
Slowly on their sea-laved wings?

Hear I harmless rains a-falling  
With their faces to the ground,  
Like lost angels out of Heaven,  
With a wailing, exile-sound—  
Clinging to the dark, yet falling  
In a death-moan to the ground?

Or, have all my thoughts gone spaceward,  
That I stare into the sky?  
Do my wandering dreamer-longings  
Waken on my lips this sigh?  
Thus you whisper of things spaceward  
While you see me watch the sky.

Do I want to wear the lilies  
In the valleys of the moon?  
They whose pale, beam-leaves drop 'round us  
This wild fall-time, as in June—  
Oh, those ever-blooming lilies  
Scattered earthward from the moon!

Do I want to wear the glories  
Set in bonds of cloud afar—  
Want the jewel-fires that glitter  
On the bosom of a star?  
Playful thus you name the glories  
That are burning out afar.

Do I think of infinite Beauty?—  
No; I think—"Three years to-night!"  
This is all the thought that haunts me,  
This has misted all the light;  
This would dim the infinite Beauty—  
This one thought—"Three years to-night!"